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An interview with:

EUGENE LAPIERRE

Q. How well did you do with the attendance this year and the circumstances you had to deal with?

EUGENE LAPIERRE: Yes, no, we're very happy with the attendance. A few hundreds of seats less than our absolute record of 2006, which was close to 175,000 spectators, which is the world record for a one-week women's event by very far. The next in line I think is Charleston with not even 100,000. So we're on a different planet with the other women's tournaments in the world.

So it's very good because we thought we would have a chance to beat that record at first with the field that we had. But considering also we had things going against the tournament, being just one week before the Olympics, being during the vacation period here in Québec, being against the NASCAR race and the FrancoFolies festival, French singing festival, and with the weather we had over the week, with the early defeats of some of the seeds. So, all considered, we think we did extremely good in reaching almost our record.

Our crowd is very loyal, fantastic crowd for tennis in Montréal. In fact, they like the event. They come and enjoy the tournament rain or shine. In fact, we proved that this week. We're very satisfied.

Q. Talk about the progression of Québec tennis players.

EUGENE LAPIERRE: I think they did extremely well. They seemed to pick this week to do good performances in the Tier I event on the WTA Tour. Wozniak, I'm sure, as I was saying,

would like to play again that match against Jankovic because she had a very bad start. But then after she proved to everybody she could stay on the same court with the No. 2 player in the world. So I think it was very positive.

I think she may not have handled the crowd, the local crowd, the encouragements and everything, as well as Stephanie Dubois did, where it really seems to spur Dubois very much, similarly to what it did to her coach, Simon Larose a few years back when he beat Guga, reached the third round against Agassi. I think it was up 4-1 against Agassi or something like that until he got tired (smiling).

But it was very pleasing to see. And the way they did that, I mean, Wozniak, she won the first round, and it was not a fluke. On the contrary, we didn't think she played very well and she still beat the No. 70 player in the world, which is something we didn't think of just a couple years ago, few months ago.

Well, that just shows that she can do much better, I think. She's got three tournaments coming up. Who knows who she will be when comes fall. Three tournaments, I mean, tournaments where she doesn't defend a whole lot of points. So every win in the next tournaments she will be playing is like improving her ranking.

And Dubois played the type of tennis that I'm sure she's very happy about the way she plays now because it's very solid. She does what she does extremely good, keeping the ball in play, running, being very quick on court to run around balls, making points off her forehand, which is her main weapon.

She has a few things that she can improve still. But at this level, she will not stay at the 100 rank very long. I think she can go further than that.

Q. With the new rules in place to guarantee the appearances of top players, how much do you think that's going to improve

what you put on the court here?

EUGENE LAPIERRE: Just wait and see. With Sony Ericsson WTA Tour, they're not going to guarantee the top 10. For our level of tournament, they'll guarantee seven of 10 starting next year. That's pretty much what we've had in the past anyway. Hopefully we do better than what they guarantee us.

But no doubt those new rules and the way they rearranged the calendar will help. They shortened the calendar, got the number of important tournaments from 26 to 19 or 20. Mostly what I like is the three-week break after Wimbledon. For the start of the summer season, the hard court season, it's going to be very important. It should help us quite a bit.

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